

Faraday Evening 2002

Before we begin the entertainment part of our program, I have an announcement to make:

Tonight will probably be our last Faraday Evening celebration as the Department of Electrical Engineering.

All I mean by this is that our department is going to have a new name. Our interim department chair Dr. Alex has worked tirelessly for many months to make this happen, and we believe the change is now at last is being approved by the Board of Trustees.

So, next year we can look forward to our first Faraday Evening with our new official name: Departamento de Ingeniería Eléctrica y de Computadoras.

Of course, Dr. Alex has left more than one mark on the department in two years as interim chair. For example,

[cultural]

- The departmental dialect is shifting toward Español – double l's are pronounced "jy." No more "Chicken and rice," or even "Arroz con po-y-o." The acceptable pronunciation is now "Arroz con po-jy-o." And my name is now pronounced Vei-jy-ett-e.
- Each faculty member is required to have at least four names, of which he or she may use any two except the first and the last.

[technical]

- The departmental budget is calculated using Mason's gain rule. This can be confusing, but at least the Dean doesn't ask any questions.

[administrative]

- We don't have faculty meetings anymore – every Thursday morning Alex calls us together for an optional tutorial session.

Dr. Alex is definitely proud of his Latin American heritage. He has said he wouldn't mind stepping down as department chair; but he has asked that we at least stage a coup to make him feel at home.

But if you want to have a coup, you have to consider the alternatives. Maybe you can imagine the vision that each of the EE faculty has for the department...

Joan Carletta – A kinder, gentler department, with high standards, ruthlessly enforced, so stop complaining. All space in the South Tower is set aside as a safe zone for all kinds of oppressed engineers, as long as their work is up to snuff.

Jack Durkin – Look to your left and to your right; two of the three of you won't be there in a year. Train transformers are distributed to all incoming freshmen for the demonstration of Ohm's law. Half the departmental office space is set aside as a humidior. The department sponsors seminars on stock market investment strategies.

Malik Elbuluk – All vocal communication must have acoustic intensity within 10 dB of the threshold of pain. All writing must be engraved in the blackboard. The course requirements for the bachelor's degree include 34 credits of Energy Conversion and Power Electronics. All departmental laboratory space is taken over to accommodate this change.

George Giakos – Gyros are served every day for lunch, with baklava for dessert. Sheep roam the corridors. "CH" is pronounced "TS," as in "If you need to find me, I will be working on my resear-ts."

Jim Grover – The department annexes the biology greenhouse for growing weed. Research assistants wear hemp lab coats. The department office is moved to the Bahamas. Jerry Garcia is revered as a hero.

S. I. Hariharan – Another name change: Department of Energetic Engineering and Applied Computer Math Science and Engineering Combined with Some Other Things. We get exercise by jumping to conclusions and bending over backward to agree with each other.

Tom Hartley – The department name isn't important. All forms are eliminated. All the requirements are summarized on a plastic-laminated sheet. We know what our job is. Every student is issued a laptop PC. Every student is issued a personal oscilloscope. Every course involves a project. Every office has a window. Every building has a swimming pool. But Tom's window is the highest, and he has his own swimming pool with a deck on the roof of Auburn Science Center.

Iqbal Husain – Everyone speaks in a whisper no more than 10 dB above the threshold of perception. Several graduate students are supported conducting research on Rogaine. The department leads the nation in external research funding, faculty salary, placement of graduates, and courtesy.

Nathan Ida – The department leads the nation in electromagnetics faculty.

Milt Kult – Vacuum tubes and crank telephones are reinstated to their rightful place.

Igor Tsukerman – New faculty candidates are required to deliver a stand-up comedy routine instead of a seminar. Watching "Young Frankenstein" is the new departmental pastime.

Oke Ugweje – Pay raises are determined by a soccer competition.

Bob Veillette – The department logo will be changed to the unit circle labeled with $e^{j\omega T}$. Incoming freshmen are sent to Complex Analysis Boot Camp. But first, some of them have to go through Arithmetic Boot Camp, Algebra Boot Camp, Calculus Boot Camp, and Differential Equations Boot Camp.

John Welch – Participation in the chess club is made a part of the breadth requirement. All schematics are drawn in PowerPoint. The curriculum is finally straightened out, and students can figure it out without asking him any questions. He is free to tell the ABET examiner what he really thinks of him.

Erik Rinaldo – Everything and everyone in the department is labeled and organized in little boxes inside bigger boxes arranged alphabetically on shelves in an adequate storage space. Everyone knows how to operate a drill press safely. The faculty allow at least 90 minutes' lead time for finding or making peculiar gadgets.

Greg Lewis – The whole 5th floor is a sculpture studio. Lab fees are collected in marble. Faculty, students, and staff are subjected to electric shock therapy for no special reason. The department is sufficiently disorganized to make Erik feel uncomfortable.

Gay Boden – Not a vision; just some instructions for everyone, so pay attention:

Stop by and say hello once in a while, but don't stay too long if you are an annoying dolt. (If you are not sure about this, just ask, and she will tell you.) Empty your mailbox more often. Pay for the snacks when you take them. Leave the office equipment where it is, even if it would fit under your sport coat. Don't ask me when Dr. Alex will return. Forward this e-mail to 10 people that you consider a friend. Sign this birthday card. Have some brownies. And tell me that I'm going to wake up and find that PeopleSoft has been just a bad dream.